



Louisiana COAST LINES

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Year of the Ocean Update - Protecting Marine Resources

Salt marshes, wetlands and coral reefs are nursery habitats for fish, shrimp, crab and other ocean shellfish.

Wetlands naturally filter and cleanse the water flowing from rivers and streams into the ocean. Estuaries — where the ocean tide meets a river current — depend on wetlands to maintain water quality.

Commercial and recreational fisheries support more than 1.3 million jobs, and in 1995 added more than \$20 billion to the gross domestic product.

Fish and marine wildlife habitats are harmed by long-term releases of pollution, short-term oil and chemical spills, and physical destruction, such as ship groundings.

Reefs and estuaries sustain 75 percent of all commercial fish and shellfish during some point in their life cycles. When these marine habitats are destroyed or injured, fish and other sea creatures cannot spawn, hatch and mature. The result is depleted or contaminated seafood meant for consumption by both humans and marine life.

Long-term releases of pollution into our watersheds, rivers, streams and estuaries can cause harmful algal blooms or low oxygen conditions that degrade or kill fish and marine habitat. The direct effect is that fish may be diseased,

damaged or depleted; seafood prices may fluctuate; and recreational and commercial fishing — a large part of our nation's economy — may be threatened.

Injured or destroyed marine habitat may indirectly upset the ecological balance and the world's food chain. For example, species of birds and marine mammals that feed on contaminated fish and shellfish may become ill or diseased and continue to spread the problem throughout the food chain. Other marine habitats, such as reefs, that are damaged or destroyed would also attract fewer tourists, influencing the nation's \$54 billion annual tourism trade.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), part of the Department of Commerce, is responsible for managing and sustaining most living marine resources and their habitats in U.S. waters, including endangered marine and coastal mammals.

NOAA's Damage Assessment and Restoration Program restores coastal areas and marine resources harmed by oil or hazardous substances, spills and ship groundings. This program also obtains compensation from responsible parties for the public's lost use and

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enjoyment of these resources.

- Get educated and share your knowledge!
- Follow regulations that limit the type, size and amount of fish you can catch.
- Don't pollute. Never throw trash, human waste, or plastic bags into the ocean. Fish, sea turtles and marine mammals mistake plastic for food sources, with lethal consequences. Don't misuse chemicals and fertilizers.
- Don't disturb or remove sea life. Unauthorized taking of coral reef, shells and other marine plants and organisms

upsets the balance and health of the ecosystem.

- Limit the use of boats and vehicles to approved areas, and obey speed limits. Swim where it is safe for you and the environment.

- Volunteer for beach clean-ups and wetland restorations.

- Participate in community natural resources planning efforts. Get involved in protecting essential fish habitat

Year of the Ocean Information Line: 1-888-4YOTO98.

Year of the Ocean Website: www.yoto.com

Senator John Breaux Attends Dedication of Atchafalaya Delta Breaux Act Projects

On July 1, 1998, Senator John Breaux and other dignitaries attended a joint Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and National Marine Fisheries Service dedication ceremony of two Breaux Act projects in

the Atchafalaya Delta, southwest of Morgan City, Louisiana. Combined, the Big Island and Atchafalaya Sediment Delivery projects are expected to create more than 3,000 acres of wetland habitat over the next 20 years.

The Atchafalaya Delta is bisected by a navigation channel, which is dredged by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to permit ship passage. In the past, dredged material was placed on the man-made Big Island and on channel banks. The two-mile-long Big Island limited westward flow of the Atchafalaya River water, hampering the natural expansion of the delta. In addition, the increased navigation channel depth accelerated current velocities in the channel, so that sediment normally deposited in the delta was transported to the Gulf of Mexico.

Project construction involved creating a distribution system to transport water and sediment throughout



Big Island Mining and Atchafalaya Sediment Delivery project sites, near Morgan City, Louisiana.

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Master of Ceremonies, Senator John Breaux (D-LA), speaks at the dedication ceremony.

the reaches of both projects. The Big Island Project included construction of distributary channels that extend from the Atchafalaya River (see map, Channel A) into the shallow water west of Big Island. The Atchafalaya Sediment Delivery project involved re-opening two distributary channels that extend from the East Pass channel of the Atchafalaya River, through Natal Channel and Radcliffe Pass, and into the shallow waters east of the existing delta. The dredged material was placed in a flat pattern that mimics the natural delta. Vegetation is already beginning to grow on the newly created delta lobes. Alligators, birds, and fish have been observed in the new habitat.

Highlights of tour and dedication:

- Two helicopters, a national guard Blackhawk and Air Logistics

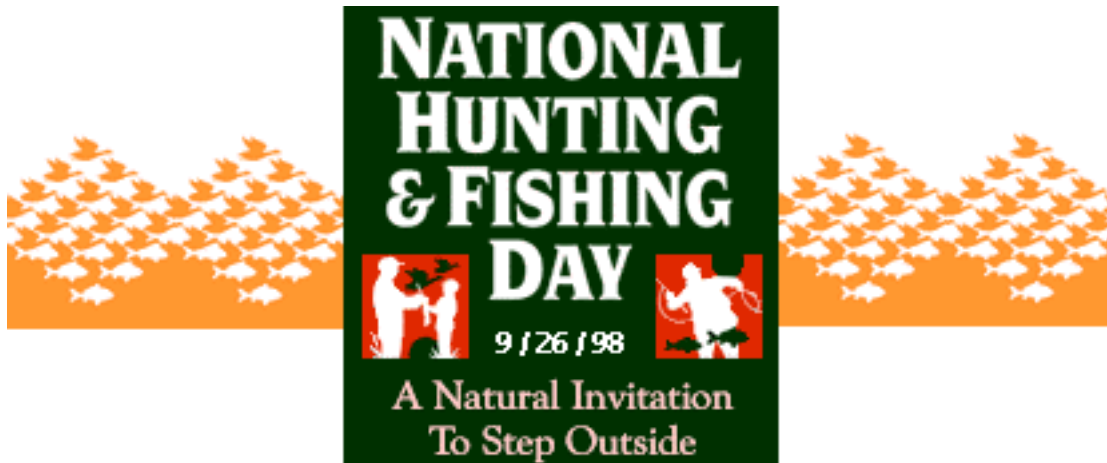
S76, provided transportation for the press and dignitaries to the project sites.

- Eight airboats were loaded with approximately 30 passengers, including U. S. Senator John Breaux. They were given a brief tour of the Big Island project area before the dedication ceremony.

- Stops included a marsh lobe under construction. Ike Mayer, the project engineer from the contracted design firm of Brown, Cunningham, and Gannuch, Inc., explained how dredged material is placed at the proper elevation for growth of waterfowl food grasses.

- Over 100 guests and officials attended the dedication ceremony in Morgan City.

- Speakers at the dedication ceremony included: The Honorable John Breaux, U.S. Senator; Jack Caldwell, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources; Rolland Schmitten, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service; Colonel William L. Conner, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; James Jenkins, Jr., Secretary, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; The Honorable Dudley A. Gautreaux, Louisiana House of Representatives; The Honorable Jack D. Smith, Louisiana House of Representatives; The Honorable Timothy Matte, Mayor, Morgan City; and Dr. Len Bahr, Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities.



Louisiana National Hunting and Fishing Day - 1998

The 14th Annual National Hunting and Fishing Day in Louisiana is scheduled to be held on September 26, from 9 a.m. till 3 p.m. at Waddill Refuge. This year's theme is "A Natural Invitation to Step Outdoors." The Refuge, located at 4142 Flannery Road in Baton Rouge, is the former Baton Rouge City Police Youth Camp. The event is sponsored by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and is free and open to the public.

Activities will include canoeing, muzzle loading, archery, duck and goose calling, and boater education. Instructors will be present for all of these activities. A fishing contest for children (ages 12 and under) is scheduled from 9 a.m. until noon. Bait and a limited number of fishing poles will be furnished. Other activities include demonstrations of fly casting, fly tying, bait casting, and jig fishing in a 5,000 gallon aquarium. Bobby the Robot Boat will also be featured. In

addition to the activities and demonstrations, tasting booths will offer samples of Louisiana-style seafood and game dishes. Participants will also be able to purchase boat registrations, hunting and fishing licenses, cookbooks, and subscriptions to the *Louisiana Conservationist* magazine. Refreshments will be provided.

A highlight of the day will be a display of booths showcasing educational materials. The Coastal Management and Coastal Restoration Divisions (CMD and CRD) of the State Department of Natural Resources will be exhibitors, along with other state agencies, national organizations, and private groups. CMD and CRD staff will be on hand to answer questions about various wetlands issues. Questions regarding Louisiana National Hunting and Fishing Day can be directed to LDWF at (225) 765-2618.



Latapie Honored at Retirement Gathering

Walter R. "Ralph" Latapie retired from State service on July 16, 1998. A retirement party was held for him to express support from his friends and present a certificate from the governor thanking him for his many years of service.

Ralph was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. For the past 30 years he has lived in St. Bernard Parish.

He received his B.S. degree in Zoology from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond and his M.S. degree in Fisheries from LSU in Baton Rouge.

During the period 1966 – 1985 Ralph worked for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF). He worked in the Seafood Division, then as Shrimp Management Study Leader for Areas I & II (St. Bernard & Plaquemine), was Director of the Marine Research Laboratory at Grand Terre for nine years, and was Permit Section Manager at DWF,

where he handled biological field investigations concerning Coastal Use Permits on contract.

During the period 1986 – 1998 Ralph worked directly for the Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Management Division, as a Field Investigator out of the New Orleans office.

Ralph has been married to his present wife, Mercedes, for 15 years. He has one son, Walter, and one daughter, Kathy, from a previous marriage.

Ralph's hobbies include beer-making, wine-making, fishing, and alligator hunting. He has been on the Coastal Advisory Committee for St. Bernard Parish for the past eight years, where he served as Chairman for two years. Ralph plans to stay active in such activities through his retirement.



Many of Ralph's friends got together to visit with him again and wish him well in his retirement.

Photo by Carl Gustafson, Chalmette.



DNR's Underwater Obstruction Removal Program

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has employed divers and other professionals to survey, locate and remove underwater obstructions and debris in coastal Louisiana waters. This program, known as the Underwater Obstruction Removal Program, is administered by the Office of Conservation and was established by Act 666 of the 1997 Louisiana legislature. Surveys have already been completed at Grand Isle,

and are expected to begin shortly in the Cameron area.

Underwater obstructions, commonly called "hangs" by fishermen, have cost mariners and the oil and gas industry millions of dollars in damages to nets and boats. In 1980, the state legislature created the Fishermen's Gear Compensation Program to compensate commercial fishermen who suffer equipment losses due to underwater hazards. Millions of dollars have been paid out over the past years. Now, DNR officials say the removal program will complement the existing program by identifying the hang, marking it, and removing it from coastal waters.

Final rules for the Underwater Obstruction Removal Program were published in the Louisiana Register in February and an initial budget of \$1.6 million has been authorized. DNR is currently soliciting contractors for diving and salvage services. All work awarded is done in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bid laws.

TEN YEARS OF WETLANDS WORKSHOPS IN COCODRIE

THE COALITION TO RESTORE COASTAL LOUISIANA WILL BE HOLDING A WORKSHOP AT LOUISIANA UNIVERSITIES MARINE CONSORTIUM (LUMCON) IN COCODRIE ON OCTOBER 24, 1998. THE WORKSHOPS WILL START AT 8:00 A.M. AND ARE SPONSORED BY THE BARATARIA-TERREBONNE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM. THE WORKSHOP SERIES, WHICH BEGAN AT COCODRIE IN 1989, WILL TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO PROTECT WETLANDS, IMPROVE WATER QUALITY, AND RESTORE BARRIER ISLANDS IN THE TERREBONNE BASIN IN THE PAST TEN YEARS.

ANYONE INTERESTED IN COASTAL ISSUES IS WELCOME, AS ARE ALL FORMER COASTAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS. A FEE OF \$45.00 INCLUDES ALL PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, FIELD TRIPS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND MEALS. OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS AND ACTIVITIES ON SUNDAY ARE OPTIONAL AND AVAILABLE AT ADDITIONAL COST. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CALL TOLL FREE, THE COALITION TO RESTORE COASTAL LOUISIANA AT 1-888-LA-COAST (1-888-522-6278).

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P. O. Box 44487 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4487

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